



THE BELL

1 Gilligan Road, East Greenbush, New York 12061-1780

VOLUME 23 ISSUE 5

MAY 2021

At Church on Sundays:

- ◆ Early Informal Service
8:30am - Outdoor Chapel
weather permitting
- ◆ Regular Service 9:30 am in
the sanctuary and
- ◆ Via Facebook on YouTube
that same afternoon
- ◆ Sunday School to be
determined

Visit us on the Web:

www.fumceg.org
www.facebook.com/FUMCEG

Phone: (518) 477-9693

Fax: (518) 477-4336

Church Office Hours:

9:00 am to 2:30 pm M - F

Email:

office@fumceg.org

BELL/Bulletin (only) Email:

editor@fumceg.org

Youth Ministries Email:

youthleaderamber@gmail.com

Rev. Sundar R. Samuel,
Pastor

Gail Welkley,
Administrative Assistant

Dear Members and Friends,



The soul has its seasons. "There is a time to be born, a time to die." The Bible has its seasons. The biblical New Year begins at the appearance of the first "new moon" of spring, when nature comes to life. The West has its seasons. The New Year begins in the depths of the winter, which is often when the "new" comes, during winter, the soul most often coming to life in the wintry seasons of life. The church has its seasons. In the church our "seasons" are not determined by climate changes or a vernal equinox. Instead of fall, winter, spring, and summer, the church calendar recognizes seven "seasons": Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Holy Week, Easter, Pentecost, and Kingdom time (unique to Wesleyans and Presbyterians). Unlike those other "four seasons" that neatly divvy up the year into four equal parts, the church seasons are all different lengths. Advent is only four Sundays long. Lent is observed for six Sundays. Epiphany and Eastertide both extend over seven Sundays. The week of Holy Week gets its own "season". But by far most of the church calendar year is designated as the Sundays after Pentecost: -- depending on what church calendar you are using, up to twenty-seven Sundays in all, with May 23, 2021 being the first of those many "Pentecost Sundays."

The reason for such a lop-sided division of the "seasons" in the church is explained in part by this week's gospel text. John 16:4-15 is identified as the "Commissioning of the Disciples" text. It is a hotly contested text, to say the least. The phrase "The Great Commission" does not appear in the Bible and was not widely used until the early 20th century, when the phrase and the text wed-locked forever. In these few verses St. John manages to encapsulate the whole of his gospel story. The earthly Jesus appears now as the risen Lord, and he is worshiped as such by his disciples. But like all disciples-whether first century or twenty-first century there are those who's worship still harbor doubts.

Jesus affirms that he has "all authority in heaven and on earth". With authority Jesus passes along the privilege of sharing the gospel. His disciples are to continue teaching the message of love he has preached, and they are promised that his presence will be with them in all that they do, even "to the end of the age". You might even call the "Great Commission" Jesus' Last Tweet.

(Continued on page 2)

A Reconciling Congregation

(Continued from page 1)

In this sentence Jesus affirmed all that he had proclaimed, all that he was, all that he had fulfilled, all that he had promised. And all of those "all's" he passed on with a new power, the power of the Holy Spirit, the persistent presence of his own person, to his first generation of disciples, and to all of those who would be disciples in the future. What an amazing tweet!

But wait a minute. That "first generation", those first post-Pentecost preachers of the Jesus story, were minuscule in numbers. They had been twelve, now they were Eleven. Eleven followers, given a charge to change the world by the risen Lord they knew to be "large and in charge", a Savior who had promised to be with them, beside them, before them, behind them, with every step they took. Bigger is always better...right? That is the mantra of the world. More money. More fame. More influence. More celebrityhood. That is what gets the world's attention. More. More. More. But there is another huge - no TINY-revolution going on under our usual radar. The most cutting-edge research in our world today going on is within something called "nanotechnology, or GRIN, for short (Genetics, Robotics, Information Technology, and Nanotechnology). The Miniscule, ultra-microscopic existence of these "nanobots" are revolutionizing medicine, home improvement, every arena of life. This nanotechnology is the twenty-first century incarnation of how something small can impact the entire known universe.

The disciples were the "nanobots" of the first century. They were microscopic nobodies with nothing impressive to offer. They were eleven losers, followers of a crucified criminal, a loser messiah. There was no possible way they could ever do anything. Yet they did. They did everything. They turned the world upside down or the world right side up! They changed everything. When the risen Christ commissioned and charged his remaining eleven disciples with his Spirit and power, he created Pentecostal nanobots seemingly small, unimpressive charges that ultimately changed the world. That is the Nano-Punch of Pentecost. On this first Sunday of Pentecost, we are called to be "charged up." The resurrected Jesus promised all his disciples whether first or twenty-first, that he would be with them till the end of the age to finish the task he has given them. The task is simply this that we are called to share the good news of the gospel and make disciples of Christ for the transformation of the world. I have good news for every one of us today that Jesus is strong enough to help us to finish the task at hand in our communities and our world. *Let us celebrate the Day of Pentecost with each other by wearing something **RED!***



Blessings...*Pastor Sundar*

HELP – NAMES OF GRADUATES NEEDED

Our church needs information on both our **High School and College 2021 graduates**, to be listed in the Sunday bulletin and The Summer BELL. To help make this happen, please send a graduate's name(s), school(s), and information about future plans to Gail Welkley, our Administrative Assistant, AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. So that we don't miss anyone, if you have just a name, pass it on and we will collect the other information. Email to office@fumceg.org or call 518-477-9693.



THE BELL is published monthly (with the exception of August) by the First United Methodist Church, 1 Gilligan Road, East Greenbush, New York 12061-1780. May, 2021, Volume 23, Issue 5. G. Herrick, **Editor (on sabbatical)**; S. Samuel, G. Welkley, **Editing Team**; J. Van Ornam, **Proofreader**; K. Van Buren, (Interim Editor) B. Van Ornam, **Production Team**; R. Reineke, **Photographer**;
The Church Staff: Rev. Sundar R. Samuel, **Pastor**; Amanda Trainor, **Director of Children's Christian Education**; Amber Biechman, **Youth Leader**; Jacqueline Krahforst, **Organist**; Herb Lamb, **Choir Director**; Cynthia Reineke, **Coordinator of EmBELLishments & Children's Music Program**; Gail Welkley, **Administrative Assistant**; Christopher Chartrand, **Custodian**; Beth Duncan, **Lay Leader**; Scott Bogart, **Peer Minister, Cornerstone Protestant Campus Ministry, The University at Albany**; Mozart M. K. Adevu, **Missionary with the General Board of Global Ministries, based in Accra, Ghana, West Africa.**

SOME NOTES ABOUT WORSHIP FOR MAY

The past months have been difficult in many ways including live, at church participation in worship. But things are gradually looking better, so much so that we can say ---

We invite you to church services!

Services are listed on page 1, at the left. We have plenty of room for you!

Recordings of the 9:30 am services are on Facebook at www.facebook.com/groups/FUMCEG/ or on YouTube at [Worship Service FUMCEG - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...).



May

Part of our Sunday morning experience in the past has been conversation and refreshing at Coffee Hour. Question - *Are you missing coffee hour?* We're planning coffee hour OUTSIDE after the 9:30 service on Communion Sundays. If the weather is awful that day we'll move the coffee hour to the next week.

Masks are still required at all church activities. Sign-ins when entering the church building are no longer necessary.

The month of May worship experiences are highlighted on some special dates in the month. Here are some of them.

The theme for **CHRISTIAN HOME MONTH** for **May 2021** is: "*Families Called to Love*". A good place to start is by reading and giving thought to Jesus' words in John 13:34-35, the commandment to love one another.

For many, **ASCENSION DAY, May 13**, will go relatively unnoticed. The Ascension is a central doctrine of the Christian faith. The Apostles' Creed reads, "he ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty."

"On **PENTECOST SUNDAY [May 23]**, we remember the day the disciples received the Holy Spirit in a special way. The story in Acts 2 describes a powerful wind and tongues of fire as the Holy Spirit was poured out on people from all over the world who came to Jerusalem to celebrate a Jewish feast. At the first Pentecost over 3000 people were baptized, creating the first church. This is why Pentecost is known as the birthday of the Christian church. . . Pentecost for Christians culminates the celebration and work of the church begun on Easter Day." *Be sure to wear something RED for Pentecost Sunday.*



Celebrate Our Heritage

HERITAGE SUNDAY shall be observed on Aldersgate Day (**May 24**), or the Sunday preceding that date (**May 23**). This day provides an opportunity for reflection on our heritage, celebration of where the Church has been, how it understands itself as it shapes us today, and the meaning of Christian conferencing.

ALDERSGATE DAY is celebrated on **May 24** (or the Sunday closest) to commemorate the day in 1738 when John Wesley experienced assurance of his salvation.

TRINITY SUNDAY (May 30) is an opportunity to explain the complex meaning of the Trinity, the reality of the totality of the God we worship.

(The above information about special dates adapted from Discipleship Ministries and other UMC resources)

Here is the lectionary for the Sundays in May:

May 2	Acts 8:26-40, Psalm 22:25-31, 1 John 4:7-21, John 15:1-8
May 9	Acts 10:44-48, Psalm 98, 1 John 5:1-6, John 15:9-17
May 16	Acts 1:1-11, Psalm 47, Ephesians 1:15-23, Luke 24:44-53
May 23	Acts 2:1-21, Psalm 104:24-34, 35b, Romans 8:22-27, John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15
May 30	Isaiah 6:1-8, Psalm 29, Romans 8:12-17, John 3:1-17

SUNDAY SCHOOL AND YOUTH GROUP

We are heading to the end of the year as we prepare for Summer and Vacation Bible School (VBS) we have a few more dates to mark down.

May 2 - Sunday School from 11:30 AM - 12:15 PM. The grades will be split. We will also have our Mother's Day store during Sunday School. The Senior High group will be a combination of Youth Group and Sunday School.



On May 2 - Youth Group (3rd - 6th grades) meeting from 12:15 AM - 1:15 PM. We will work on our World Project Part 1 and have a light snack.

May 23 - Sunday School from 11:30 AM - 12:15 PM. The grades will be split. The Senior High group will be a combination of Youth Group and Sunday School.

May 23 - Youth Group (3rd - 6th grades) meeting from 12:15 AM - 1:15 PM. We will work on our World Project Part 2 and have a light snack.

Volunteers Needed for Vacation Bible School

VBS will be starting before we know it! We are going to have VBS on Wednesday Nights starting **June 23rd** running until the end of August. Our plan is to serve dinner and do the curriculum. This is only possible with Volunteers. We are looking for Volunteers to sponsor dinner and to help with the VBS Lessons (Stories, Crafts, etc.). Please contact Amanda at egchristianedfumc@gmail.com or Amber at Youthleaderamber@gmail.com to volunteer to help.

Blessings,

Amber & Amanda

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN



The UMW's monthly meeting will be on **May 3**. All ladies of the church are welcome to attend. We will be finalizing the plans for our June picnic at Lorraine Beals' house. Lorraine always makes this time a lot of fun. The theme will be *animal prints*. You can wear a mask with an animal theme or any other item you wish with this theme. Of course, if you don't have anything like that you still are welcome to participate.

JOSEPH'S HOUSE LUNCHES - A FAMILY PROJECT

Preparing lunches for Joseph's House can be a fun family activity - just ask the Uhr or Valenich families. Children in their families have selected snacks, baked cookies, decorated the lunch bags with flowers and stickers, wrote notes about Jesus' love and helped pack the lunches. Each family found it to be a good hands-on way to teach about what we can personally do to help people who are experiencing homelessness. Robin Uhr said that her grandkids were well aware that the lunches went to hungry people. Owen Valenich summed up his experience, "I realize that I can go to the fridge and there's food but that's not the same for everyone; I like sharing what we have with other people."



Thank you to all the volunteers who have signed up to provide lunches on Mondays. We are covered through May 10, but need volunteers for the remaining Mondays in May and June. If you can sign up to prepare and deliver 17 sandwiches to the shelter for distribution, along with vegetables or potato chips and a dessert, please contact Kevin Conley (email: e.kevin.conley@gmail.com; phone: 518-253-4907). Assistance with delivering lunches to the Joseph's House administrative offices is available, if needed, and you can be reimbursed for purchased food.

MAY IS SHARE THE LOVE MONTH!

Our eighth **CHANGE THE WORLD** event is set to kick off on **May 1**. This year, instead of being held on one day, we will focus on spreading the love of Jesus Christ all month. We have prepared many activities to demonstrate that love, but we encourage you to find your own ways as well.



May 2 Help build a picnic table and bench for St. Paul's Center. 10:30 AM church garage. 2-4 people needed to sand, cut, drill and assemble. Project coordinator: Kevin Conley

May 12 Prepare potted plants for nursing home residents. Time and Location TBA.. Delivery: May 22. Project coordinator: Carrie Larson

May 16 Donate to Food Drive Drop-Off for area food pantries and Veterans. Church garage 9AM-12 Noon. Especially needed: toiletries and reusable shopping bags. Also, sugar, coffee, peanut butter, jelly, creamer, spaghetti sauce (all in plastic jars). Project coordinators: Lorraine Beals and Aleta Schweigert

ON-GOING MONTH-LONG ACTIVITIES:

Fill a Shoebox for the Red Bird Mission in Kentucky. Personal toiletries for needy families in Appalachia. In the entryway by the Sunday school door you can pick up a shoebox or use your own. A list of items needed can be found on the yellow sheet (in the mailed Church BELL) or as an attachment (in the emailed Church BELL) or in the shoeboxes at church. Please return filled shoeboxes to church by **May 31**. Goal: 50 shoeboxes. Project Coordinator: John Schmidt

Plant Zinnias. Use the zinnia seeds provided in this issue of **The BELL** (or at church) to attract Monarch Butterflies. The nectar will help enable them to return to Mexico in the fall. Project Coordinator: Aleta Schweigert

Paint Kindness Rocks and create artwork for nursing home residents. Our Youth and Sunday School children will be using their creative skills. Project Coordinators: Amanda Trainor and Amber Telford.

Create "Thinking of You" cards for Veterans. Remind our Veterans that they are being thought of. Cards may be dropped off at church by June 1. Project coordinator: John Schmidt

Create Comfort Blankets for Albany Medical Center. If you knit, crochet or quilt, consider making a comfort blanket (at least 4'x4') for terminally ill patients. Blankets may be dropped off at church. Project Coordinator: Aleta Schweigert

Take the "Share the Love Challenge". Use the May calendar provided to write 31 names of people you know. (One name in each box). Send each person a reminder of how much he/she is loved and valued. Perhaps a text, email, phone call, short note or card, or keep them in prayer. You may want to use the church prayer list. Coordinator: John Schmidt

Please contact John Schmidt (518-477-6736 or jschmidt13050@gmail) with any questions or for more information. We hope that the pandemic does not discourage anyone from participating in this year's **CHANGE THE WORLD** event. Perhaps, more than ever, we need to remind others of the love of Jesus.



IMPORTANT NOTE

More information and **CHANGE THE WORLD** supplies are on the display table in the lobby of the Sunday School/office entrance to the church.

May 30 – PEACE WITH JUSTICE SUNDAY

In Arizona border towns, communities facing social challenges are dramatically divided. In Liberian villages, citizens' human rights are being violated. In local U.S. communities, women and girls are being bought and sold against their will.



Moved by Christ's love to pursue reconciliation and peace, honoring the dignity of every individual made in God's image, The United Methodist Church is unwilling to turn a blind eye to injustice.

Although any one of us, and possibly even our congregation, may lack the resources alone to effect change in a broken world, our giving is vital for the UMC to continue its global ministries of reconciliation. Because of the **Peace with Justice Sunday** offering, the people of The United Methodist Church are able to make a difference together by sowing seeds—and yielding fruit!—of peace.

Our **Peace with Justice Sunday** gifts make possible our critical kingdom work in the world. Because we give:

- Methodists spearhead a peace ministry uniting Arizona border communities
- United Methodists in Liberia are being equipped to implement the denomination's Social Principles to address social-justice issue
- Pennsylvania students are educating their community about sex-trafficking at home and abroad

These initiatives, and hundreds of other ones, are possible when we support **Peace with Justice Sunday, May 30, 2021.**

Adapted from UMCgiving

MAY IS ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

Work on a federal law to establish Pacific/Asian American Heritage Week was begun in 1977. It was signed into law by President Carter in 1978. In 1990 the week was expanded to a month. "The month of May was chosen to commemorate the immigration of the first Japanese to the United States on May 7, 1843, and to mark the anniversary of the completion of the transcontinental railroad on May 10, 1869. The majority of the workers who laid the tracks were Chinese immigrants."

Adapted from numerous US Govt websites, including The Library of Congress

An important influence of the Pacific/Asian traditions in The United Methodist Church can be seen in our hymns. Here is just a sample.

China: UMH (The United Methodist Hymnal) 678, "Rise to Greet the Sun": words by Chao Tzu-ch'en

Japan: UMH 552, "Here, O Lord, Your Servants Gather": words by Tokuo Yamaguchi, 1958; On YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5GAjLtbVBp0>

Korea: TFWS (The Faith We Sing) 2232, "Come Now, O Prince of Peace" ("O-So-So"): words by Geonyong Lee

Philippines: UMH 411, "Dear Lord, Lead Me Day by Day": words by Francisca Asuncion. On YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZDDnIdKPNC0>

Vietnam: UMH 498, "My Prayer Rises to Heaven": words and music by Dao Kim

MOTHER'S DAY IS May 9 - A DAY TO CELEBRATE ALL WOMEN!

Mother's Day is about celebrating all mothering instincts. Remembering all women including grandmothers and aunts, and all women who care for children and youth and marginalized and elderly persons with generosity and joy and compassion.



A PRAYER FOR MEMORIAL DAY—MAY 31

Our holy and gracious God, help us to remember.

Help us to remember the sacrifices bravely made in which one has given life for another and for all.

Help us to remember those that stand in the breach where there is trouble and in which conflict threatens to undo your good creation.

Help us to remember that we look for the day when every sword will be replaced by a plow, that all may be fed and live in your peace.

Forgive us every sin that makes for division and for war, and bring us all into your kingdom on earth as in heaven.

This we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

By Rev Doug Paysour, Lead Pastor
Windsor Hills UMC, Roanoke VA

